metro®
BOSTON HOLIDAY EDITION

2011 PERSON OF THE YEAR

IT HAD TO BE YOU

- Steve Jobs died in October, but the gadgets he gave us changed us forever
- Metro readers vote the technology icon as 2011's biggest newsmaker {page 06}

HER DIVORCE WAS THE BIGGEST GOSSIP ITEM OF 2011? YUCK!
POP CULTURE {page 14}

THE FUNNIEST THING WE SAW ON THE BIG SCREEN ALL YEAR
FILMS {page 15}

WOMEN ARE ROLLING IN THE DEEP OF OUR 2011 BEST-OF LIST
MUSIC {pages 16-17}

Boston's best athlete in 2011

Bruins star leads team to first Stanley Cup in 39 years {page 29}

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Boston '11: A look at the year in news

From the occupation of Dewey Square — which, depending on whom you ask, is still going on in other forms — to the corrupt politicans that are now jailhounds, here are some of the more memorable stories of 2011

SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Casinos finally hit the jackpot with the state Legislature.

▶ **Occupied Boston:** From October through December, Occupy Boston protesters transformed the lawn of Dewey Square into a Tent City bursting with free speech, strange smells and sometimes satirical standoffs with Boston police.

From the "sinkgate" saga — where campers tried to bring in an industrial-sized sink to clean dishes — to two court battles barring the eviction of the campsite, occupiers made their mark in the Hub and remained the longest-standing occupation in the nation.

Whether you supported or disagreed with them, everyone was talking about the makeshift village that was vying for social and economic change.

▶ **All bets are on:** After years of debate and deal-making, lawmakers finally doubled down and voted to allow casinos to be built across the state.

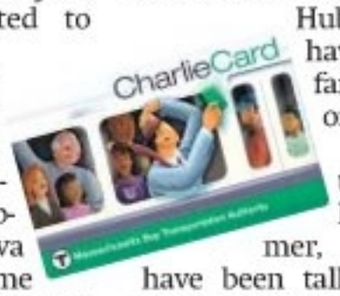
And casino developers wasted no time.

Las Vegas mogul Steve Wynn has made friend with New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft as the insanely wealthy duo work out plans for a potential resort casino in Foxborough.

The legislation allowed for three casinos, a slots parlor and likely many "not in my backyard" protests.

▶ **T driver assaults:** Attacks on T drivers, especially spitting in their faces, became a disturbing trend this year that officials wanted to quickly stop.

To fight back, the T's acting general manager announced in November that police would be swabbing suspects' saliva and sending it to crime labs so they could identify perpetrators and take them to court.



The T also launched a courtesy campaign to remind people to be nice and pay their fare.

▶ **Potential fare increase:** It has been half a decade since Hub riders have seen a fare increase on the T.

But since the end of last summer, officials have been talking about the possibility of spiking prices and cutting service on the MBTA in order to battle a $161 million budget gap.

While a lengthy public process is needed prior to any implementation, MassDOT Secretary Rich Davey has said an increase is unavoidable.

▶ **HisToric scam:** A Commuter Rail employee's sharp eye put a stop to the largest ticket scam in the history of the T in March.

Four people were charged with forging thousands of T passes worth about $4 million and illegally selling them to riders.

Tragic crime

▶ Wilkerson

Mass. corruption

▶ **State pols go to the state pen:** If there were a contest among states with the most politicians currently in jail, Massachusetts would come close to winning.

Former state Sen. Dianne Wilkerson reported to a Connecticut prison in early March. Former Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner went behind the bars of a West Virginia prison in March, too. In November, former House Speaker Sal DiMasi began his eight-year sentence.

All three were sentenced for corruption.

It will be a while before these three are released from jail, but it may take longer for the state's leaders to repair the reputation Massachusetts has earned because of these misdeeds.

STEVE ANNEAR and **MICHAEL NAUGHTON**

Tweets of the year

"We occupy Boston this Friday at 6 PM, Dewey Square."

@OCCUPY_BOSTON — ON SEPT. 28, THE OCCUPY BOSTON MOVEMENT MADE A FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF WHEN AND WHERE IT WOULD SET UP CAMP IN BOSTON FOR MORE THAN TWO MONTHS.

"FBI Agents in Santa Monica, CA have captured Boston Fugitive James J. 'Whitey' Bulger and his girlfriend Catherine Greig."

@FBIPRESSOFFICE — ON JUNE 23, AGENTS FINALLY CAUGHT THE ALLEGED FUGITIVE MOB BOSS.

Editor's note

This special year-end edition of Metro was printed in advance. Metro will return to its normal publishing schedule on Jan. 4. For breaking news updates, please visit www.metro.us.

2011: Innocence lost

Day care bus tragedy

The death of toddler Gabriel Josh-Cazir Pierre in September sparked a flurry of questions about the state of the day care system in Massachusetts.

PHOTO BY NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ Police investigate the scene in Dorchester where a toddler was found dead in a school bus.

Pierre was found dead inside a sweltering van parked outside a day care center.

The Dorchester center was shut down after authorities found multiple safety violations that needed to be addressed.

State child-care officials also formed a special panel to review children's transportation services.

The panel recommended that transportation services for children be improved with required parental notifications, passenger logs and vehicle-monitoring devices.

An attorney for Pierre's family said the recommendations were a good start, but more needed to be done.

"I think what we need is a true enforcement arm for making sure those regulations are followed," the family's lawyer said at the time. METRO

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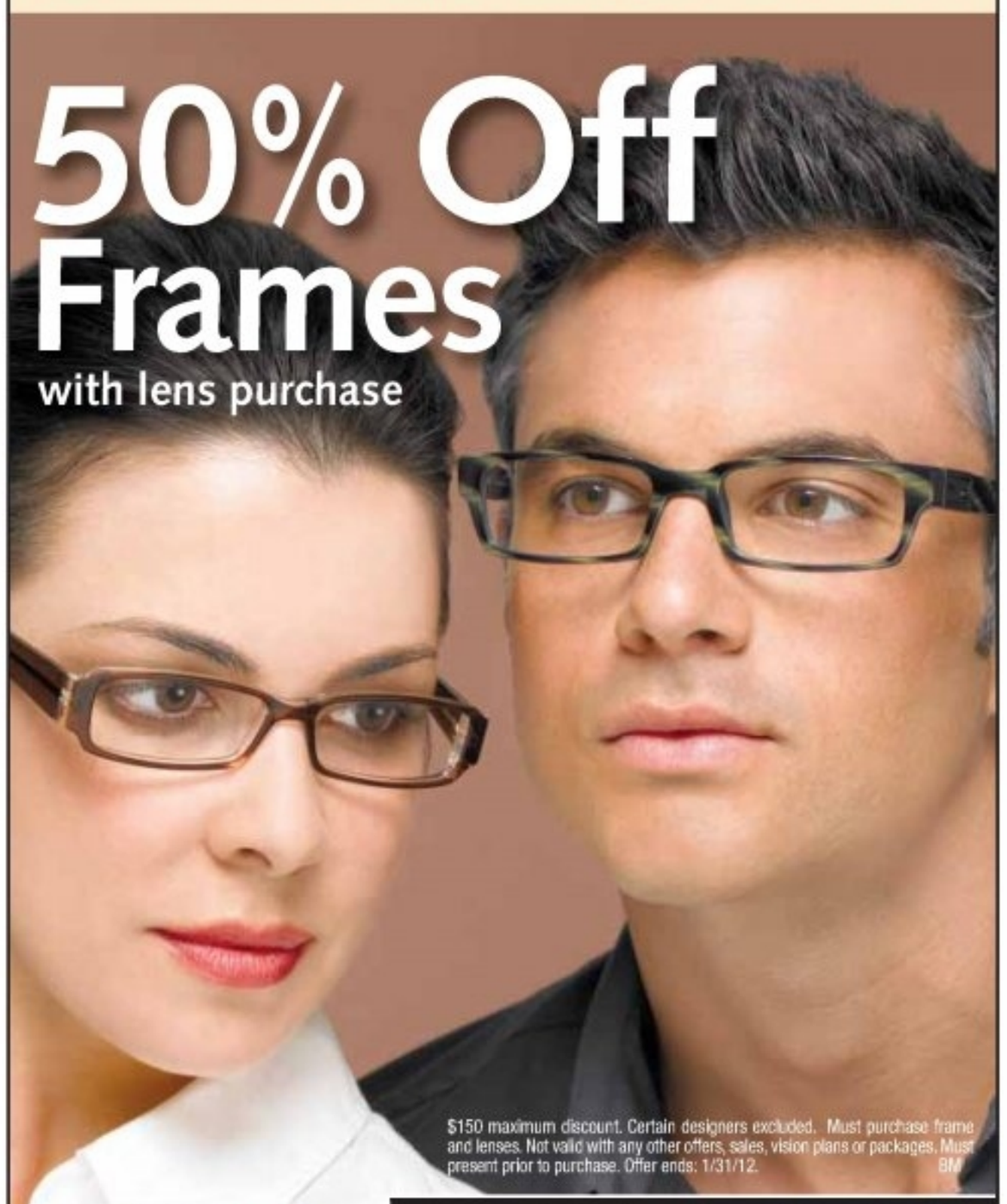

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Boston's Top 3 people who made headlines in 2011

Boston's Top 3 newsmakers this year inspired us, scared us and amused us They are people who did things we thought would never happen Here are some of the people who kept our attention for days and weeks in 2011

Bye-bye, Barney

GETTY IMAGES

After three decades, 16 terms and a host of controversial scenarios, Congressman Barney Frank decided it was time to throw in the towel and step away from the political spotlight.

Known for his witty, sometimes offensive remarks, Frank, a Newton Democrat, announced his retirement in November.

Frank was not only behind the Dodd-Frank Act, a push for Wall Street reform, he was also the first openly gay elected official to serve as a U.S. representative.

The longtime politician said recent congressional redistricting would have made his reelection bid a rough one.

Congress certainly will not be as entertaining without him.

Paging Dr. Miracle

LIGHTCHASER PHOTOGRAPHY

Mitch Hunter, Dallas Wiens and Charla Nash didn't have a face until Dr. Bohdan Pomahac came in to their lives.

The Brigham and Women's Hospital surgeon heads the face transplant team there and thrust the hospital in to the spotlight this year when he conducted three full-face transplants. It was the first time a full-face transplant was done in this country.

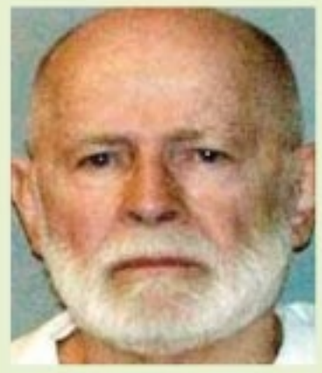
Pomahac attended medical school in his native Czech Republic and eventually made his way to Boston where he worked tirelessly to make the relatively new surgery a reality.

The marathon surgeries took as long as 20 hours and required dozens of doctors, nurses and technicians to complete.

While impressive to many, Pomahac's work is most extraordinary to his patients who previously had little or no facial structure.

"To know that I could smell a rose ... it really hit home for me," Wiens said during a press conference a few weeks after his surgery.

STEVE ANNEAR and **MICHAEL NAUGHTON**



Here's Whitey

After he spent 16 years avoiding capture by state and federal authorities, many thought alleged fugitive mob boss James "Whitey" Bulger would never be caught.

At about 1 a.m. on June 23, the FBI tweeted a message that would write a new chapter in Boston history.

"FBI Agents in Santa Monica, CA have captured Boston Fugitive James J. 'Whitey' Bulger and his girlfriend Catherine Greig," tweeted @FBIPressOffice.

Bulger's capture was a much-needed win for the agency, which had little respect in Boston after it was learned that an agent had tipped off the accused murderer as he was about to be arrested.

The couple was reportedly turned in by a former beauty queen from Iceland who lived next to the fugitives while in Santa Monica. She recognized Greig as the FBI made a media blitz in an attempt to locate the couple.

Greig, 60, is awaiting trial on a charge of harboring a fugitive.

Bulger, 82, currently occupies a Plymouth jail cell. He sometimes returns to South Boston — but in an orange prison jumpsuit and handcuffs.

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Person of the Year:
Steve Jobs

You asked for it, you got it: The man behind the iPhone and iPad named 2011's most influential person Occupy protesters were right behind him

Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple who died in October after a long battle with cancer, has been named Person of the Year for 2011 by Metro's readers.

In a close second place came the Occupy movement — namely, the 99 percent.

In the three years of this Metro event, voting has never been as high or as competitive. Until the final day of voting, on Dec. 22, the two nominees were running neck and neck.

metro
MAN AND WOMAN OF THE YEAR
2011

▶ Occupiers got arrested.

In the end, it came down to a difference of 25 votes, from the thousands cast by Metro readers.

What clinched it for Steve Jobs, perhaps, was the feeling that his work changed the world forever, while the Occupy protests have dominated the headlines for only months.

As one reader, Eric Burger, put it: "Without the inventions of the iPhone, iPad, Occupy wouldn't have gotten off the ground. Steve Jobs changed lives to be simpler and more pleasant."

The Occupy movement dominated the early stages of voting, but the last five days saw a surge in support for Steve Jobs.

As another reader, Terrence of Cambridge, Mass., said: "Occupy will be back. What they expressed changed the terms of political debate in our country — but will it be forever? Steve Jobs changed the world in so many ways, for always. Steve Jobs — it had to be you." METRO

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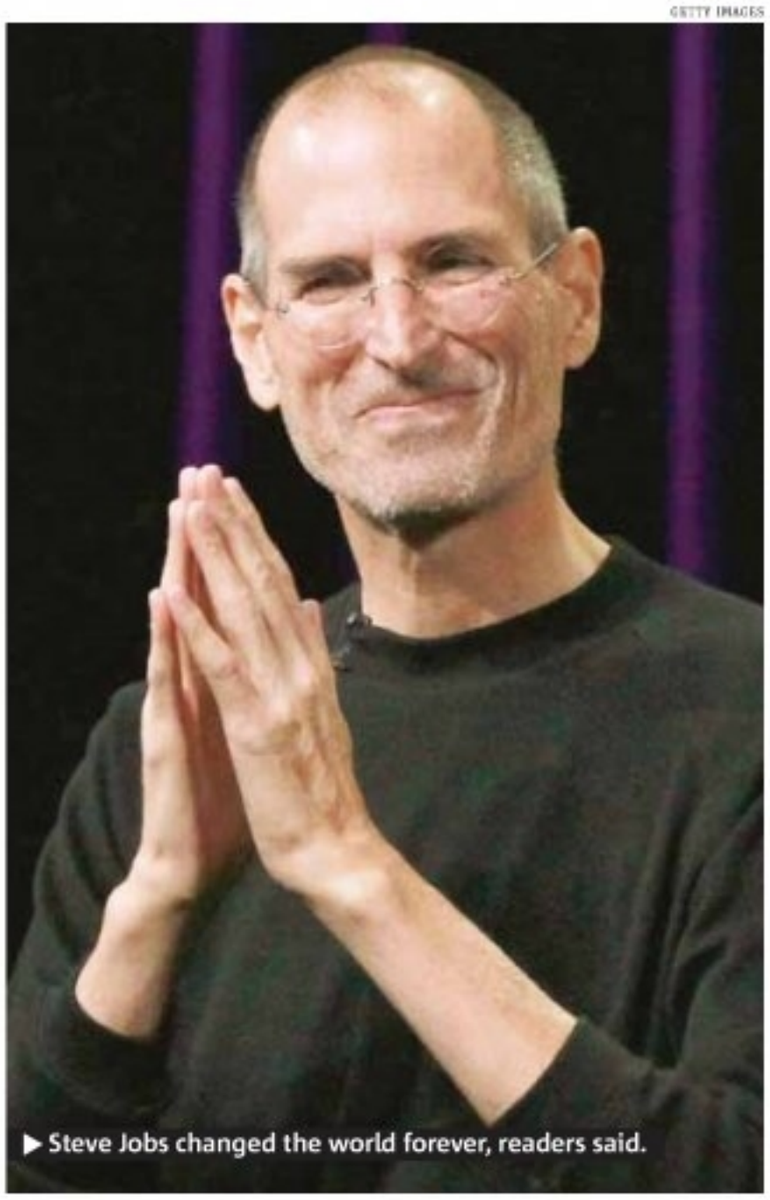
▶ Steve Jobs changed the world forever, readers said.

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Outrage across globe

2011 passed with its fair share of bumps Metro recaps the bumpiest

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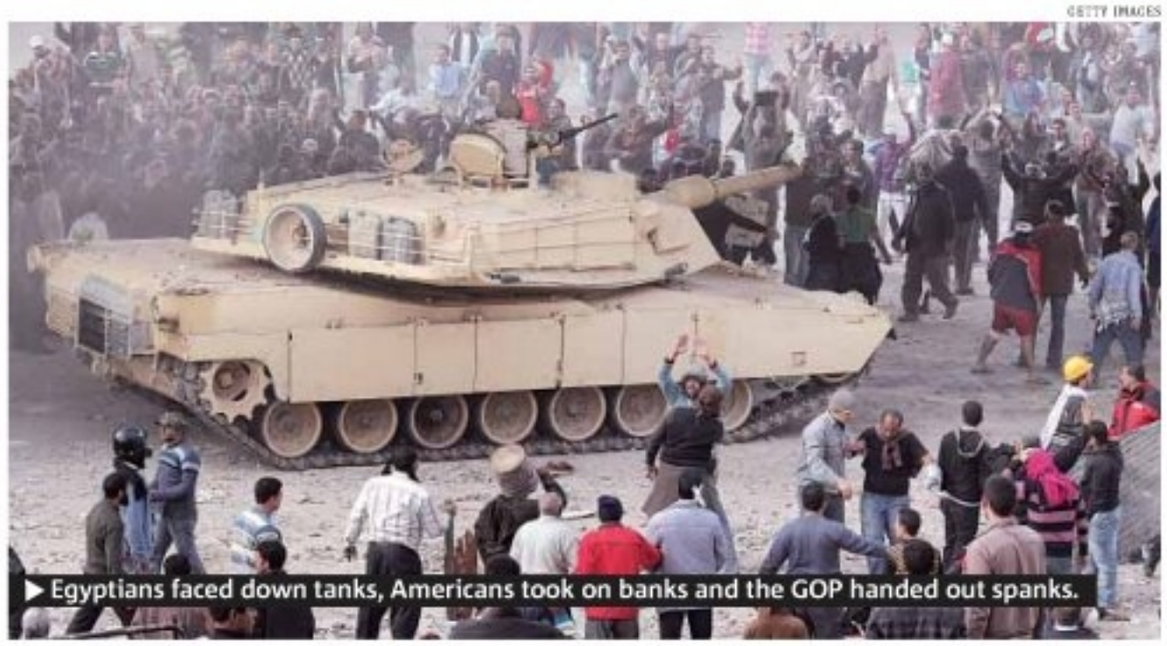

Egyptians faced down tanks, Americans took on banks and the GOP handed out spanks.

1 Arab Spring

For years, young people in the Middle East were a simmering cauldron of a demographic with no jobs, no voice and no hope for the future. That cauldron finally bubbled over in 2011 as massive anti-government protests took down dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, won reforms in Jordan, Oman and Yemen and inspired crackdowns in Bahrain and Syria.

NATE JONES
nate.jones@metro.us

2 Occupy movement

Call them what you will — a theatrical stunt, a brave stand, a collective wail from an entitled generation — but at the very least, this fall's Occupy Wall Street protests succeeded in turning America's rising income inequality into a legitimate political issue.

3 EU fiscal crisis

After the financial crisis brought the so-called PIIGS countries (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) to the brink of bankruptcy, a continent-wide split emerged between poor countries angered at harsh austerity measures and rich countries upset at footing the bill for their irresponsible neighbors.

4 Casey Anthony trial

Every news cycle needs its sideshows, and none grabbed the attention this year quite like the trial of accused child-killer Casey Anthony. The case fit so well into a predetermined narrative — woman accused of killing kid, media turns on woman, woman alleges sexual abuse in her past — that the entire thing seemed made to air on Court TV. By the day of the verdict, as Anthony was declared not guilty and Nancy Grace took to the airwaves to declare that the devil was dancing, it was as if everyone involved was playing out predetermined roles that would be repeated until the end of time.

5 Debt ceiling

Republicans threatened to let the U.S. government default on its national debt rather than raise the debt ceiling as per usual. The game of chicken ended with both parties agreeing to broad budget cuts, but in the ultimate instance of Beltway disfunction the bipartisan "supercommittee" chosen to work out the details announced it had failed at its only goal.

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Ends (of an era?)

Among the many deaths of 2011, Osama bin Laden, Iraq War top list Libya, Japan each struggled as well

1 OSAMA + IRAQ WAR

▶ Bin Laden's death was celebrated with street parties, the Iraq War with a collective shrug of the shoulders.

If the 1960s ended with Altamont and the '90s ended on 9/11, then you could make the case that the '00s didn't fully come to a close until this year, when two of the events that best defined that decade — the Iraq War and the hunt for Osama bin Laden — drew to an end. Fittingly for the end of an era marked by disappointment and fear, both ended on something of an anticlimax: Bin Laden was found hiding not in some supervillain's lair but in suburban Pakistan, while the Iraq War finished not with a dramatic victory but with a slow, months-long drawing-down process.

2 Libya, Gaddafi

Only in Libya did the global Arab Spring erupt into a full-fledged civil war. The uprising against strongman Muammar Gaddafi — a thorn in the U.S.'s side for four decades — put America in a curious position: How to assist the rebels in overthrowing Gaddafi without becoming embroiled in a third Mideast quagmire? In the end, the Obama administration elected to pursue a constitutionally-dubious air campaign against loyalist forces, gambling that the end of Gaddafi's 40-year reign would outweigh the means. With a lack of Vietnam- or even Iraq-style protests against the short war, the American people seemed to agree.

NATE JONES
nate.jones@metro.us

3 Gabrielle Giffords, Norway shootings

In the wake of the attempted assassination of a congresswoman in January and a Norwegian murder spree in July, we jumped to easy conclusions, blaming inflammatory rhetoric and Islamic terrorists. The thought was almost comforting — if we just wiped out the causes, we could get rid of the effects. When the truth came out, it was more chilling: Both shootings were the random work of deranged schizophrenics. Only in the delusional minds of their perpetrators did the chain of cause-and-effect make any sense.

ATHIT PERAWONGMETHA/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Debris

4 Japan earthquake, nuclear fear

By the numbers: **8.9 magnitude** earthquake. **30-foot** tsunami. More than **18,000 killed**. Fukushima plant meltdown reached **Level 7** on the International Nuclear Event Sale. **100-1,000 future deaths** predicted after harmful radiation exposure in the area.

5 Steve Jobs dead

Under Steve Jobs' leadership, Apple's products felt like the future, but Jobs was something of a throwback: In an economy increasingly devoted to selling intangible "services," here was a man who actually made things. The grief felt upon his death — the sense that some great technocratic paradise was lost — was best summed up by The Onion: "Last American Who Knew What The F— He Was Doing Dies."

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SPN-101: Elementary Spanish I
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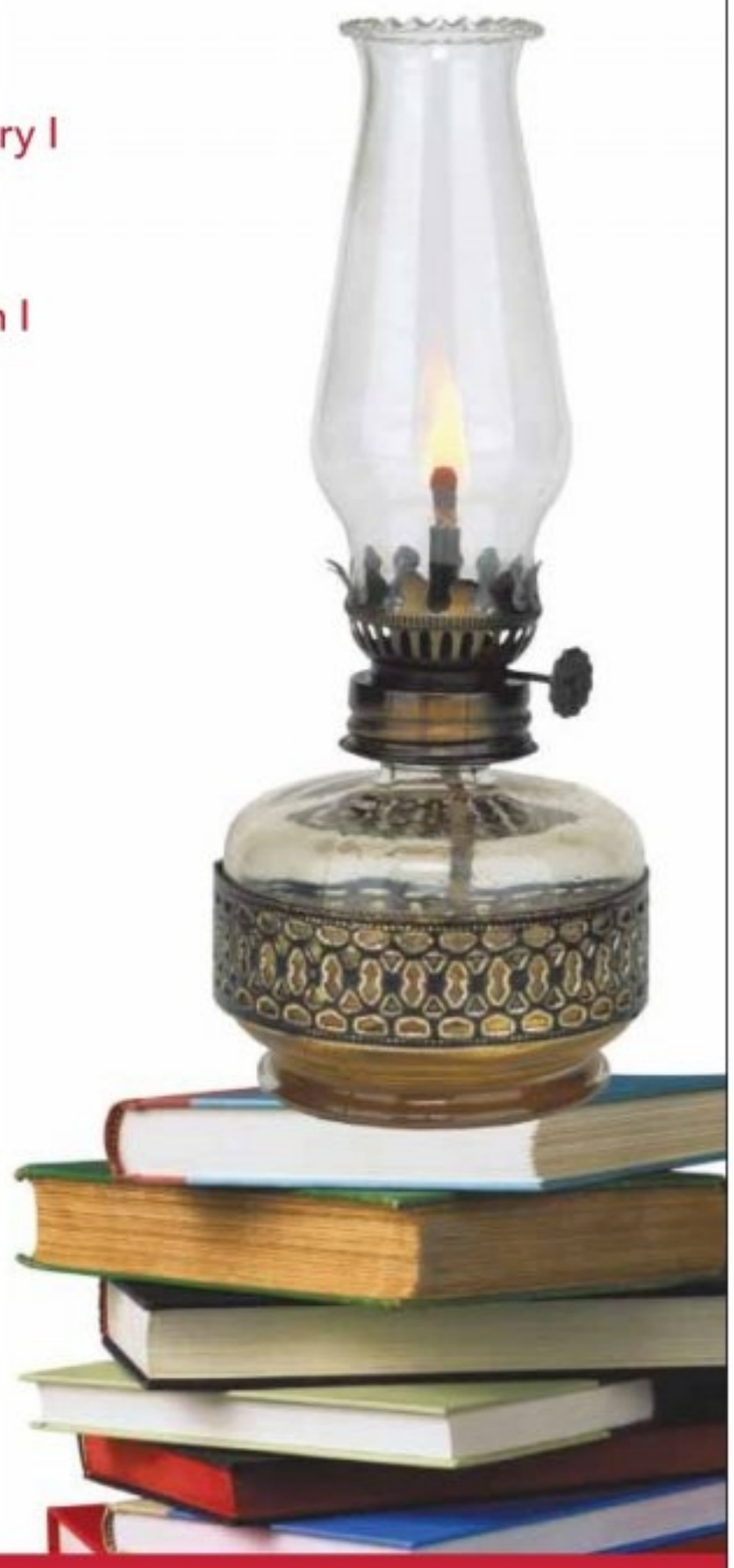

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PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

▶ A flooded structure and telephone poles are seen along the flooded Mississippi River in Wilkinson County, Miss.

2011: A year of DISASTER

Historic US weather catastrophes took an unprecedented toll in human lives and livelihood ◐ At least 12 natural disasters wreaked more than $1 billion in damage apiece ◐ A look at the five most costly disasters

5 Mississippi floods

More than 55 percent of the U.S. experienced either severe drought or extreme precipitation this year — the highest proportion on record, according to the National Climate Data Center. The average is 20 percent.

The Ohio River Basin received almost three times its normal rainfall. That water, combined with melting snowpack, flowed into the Mississippi, where it inundated 6.8 million acres of farmland between Missouri and Louisiana. Economic losses ranged from $3 billion to $4 billion. At least two people died.

4 Hurricane Irene

Hurricane Irene left a trail of inland flooding and storm damage from North Carolina to Maine. More than 7 million homes and businesses lost electricity. Vermont was struck particularly hard. Two of the state's iconic covered bridges washed away, and some 250 roads were closed. "It's the worst flooding we've seen in 75 years, perhaps ever," Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin said.

The storm hit eastern North Carolina as a Category 1 storm on Aug. 27. Irene reached New York, the most populous U.S. city, as a tropical storm, toppling trees and tearing down power lines but causing less disruption than was feared.

The storm approached 2005's Katrina in size, with hurricane-strength winds

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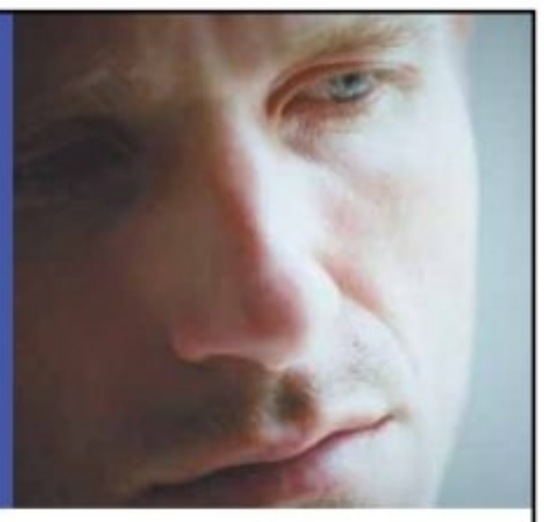

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felt 104 miles away and tropical-storm-strength winds stretching 230 miles. At least 45 people died. Irene's bill came to more than $7.3 billion.

3 Tornado devastates Joplin, Missouri

A twister three-quarters of a mile wide touched down in Joplin before dinnertime on May 22, a Sunday. It etched a wide scar of devastation into the landscape, including damage to thousands of buildings, including the local high school and the city's main hospital. Over five days, 180 tornadoes devastated lives and livelihoods across 15 states.

The Joplin tornado was rated EF5, the most powerful. It contained multiple vortexes — smaller, internally spinning whirls that add wind force to a twister. In all, 161 people died in Joplin, making it the deadliest single twister since modern record keeping began in 1950. Total losses from five days of storms topped $9.1 billion, with 177 people dead.

▶ Destroyed homes and debris cover the ground after a powerful tornado in Joplin, Mo.

The total human toll of 2011 is second only to that of 1925, when the most ferocious tornado recorded wrought a path of destruction 219 miles long across Missouri, Illinois and Indiana — leaving 695 people dead. Because storms weren't evaluated with today's rigor, scientists can't be certain whether it was truly a single tornado or a cluster.

2 Drought, heat waves and wildfires

The driest 12 months on record in Texas led cattlemen to slaughter herds early or ship them by train to greener pastures. Drought left crops twisting in the wind from the lower Great Plains to New Mexico. The U.S. government estimates that 33 percent of the nation's cotton crop will be lost this year — topping the 1933 record. Texas Governor Rick Perry, Republican Presidential candidate and son of a cotton farmer, asked supporters to pray for rain.

The drought in the southern plains and southwest has led to direct losses of crops, timber and livestock worth almost $10 billion. Weather extremes have caused the U.S. Department of Agriculture to misestimate its two most recent annual crop forecasts by the most in a quarter century. Reservoirs like this one near Robert Lee, Texas, are drying up. Long-term trends are sobering. The Lower Colorado River Authority reports that "The weather outlook for our basin over the next six months still doesn't offer much hope for significant rain."

1 SUPER OUTBREAK

A girl's room is left exposed in the devastated town of Pleasant Grove, Ala., after the deadliest of 343 tornadoes that touched down from April 25-30 killed 78 people in northern Alabama.

Eleven twisters in the system reached category EF4, and four were rated EF5. In all, 321 people died. Total damages exceeded $10.2 billion, making it the most expensive calamity in a record year for U.S. disasters. BLOOMBERG

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YEAR-END

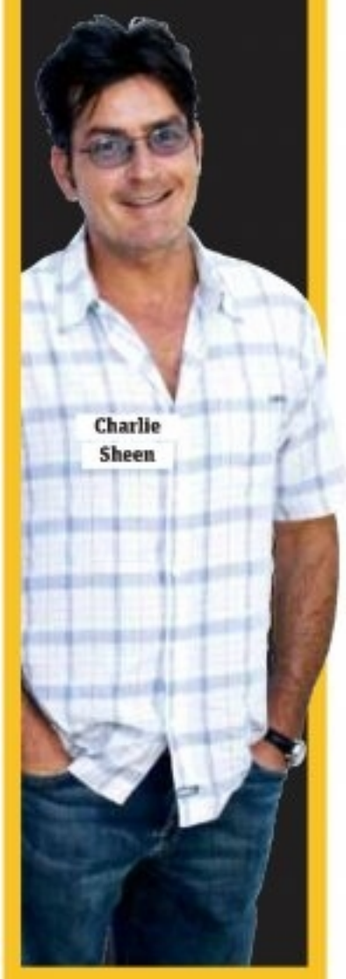
25 Biggest moments in pop culture

Kim Kardashian steals the spotlight ● Royals will have a more lasting impact — not just a longer marriage

2011 in review

Finding our Top 5 picks

Every December, Metro's Features staffers compile their Top 5 lists, choosing the best in pop culture moments, film, television and music. We average out those selections to come up with the "official" Metro picks for the best of the year — and then fight over each other's choices. How do your favorites add up to ours? Let us know at letters@metro.us.



Charlie Sheen

Editors' panel

▶ It's a sad state of affairs when a spoiled sitcom actor and somebody who doesn't even deserve to be famous get more attention for throwing an Internet hissy fit (Sheen) and divorcing some dude (Kardashian), than a gifted singer who left this mortal coil too early. If only **Amy Winehouse** had tiger blood. ● PAT HEALY, MUSIC EDITOR

▶ Tuck this little thought in your pocket: Once upon a time, we didn't think pop culture would ever be (nearly) rid of **Paris Hilton**, either. ● AMBER RAY, FEATURES EDITOR

▶ **Amy Winehouse** is tragic — yes, tragic: Bring it on, "There are wars we should be paying attention to" crowd — and makes me a little wary of talking about anyone else on this list. She obviously had some bigger demons, and even after this was obvious she was an easy gossip target. ● MONICA WEYMOUTH, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

▶ I would argue that in the long run, it's **Prince William** and **Kate Middleton** that will end up having the most far-reaching impact on pop culture. Just recently on "Saturday Night Live," there was a sketch about Kate and **Pippa Middleton** even though there's been nothing newsworthy about them in months. It just shows how much deeper their impact will be felt. ● HEIDI PATALANO, FILM EDITOR

▶ **Prince William** and **Kate Middleton** kind of bore me. You can bet when **Prince Harry** gets married, some maid of honor with a slightly above-average rear won't steal the show. But is it just me, or are these sadder than in past years? We need to excommunicate **the Kardashians** ASAP so I can read gossip magazines in peace. ● MW

Kim Kardashian

▶ Re: **The Kardashians**. I guess I'm just shocked by how shocked I was at their "shocking" news of divorce. ● DOROTHY ROBINSON, DEPUTY FEATURES EDITOR

▶ I just expected them to fake it for a solid 18 months like the rest of us normal, greedy, materialistic humans would do. And ... that's a wrap. I will not speak of these people for the remainder of 2011, so help me TMZ. ● MW

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Amy Winehouse

Metro's Top 5

1. Kim Kardashian gets married and divorced in the span of 72 days.
2. Charlie Sheen gets fired, unleashing the unknown power of tiger blood.
3. Amy Winehouse dies at the age of 27.
4. Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher call it quits.
5. Prince William marries Kate Middleton in a fairy-tale royal wedding.

The Word columnist Dorothy Robinson's Top 5

Dorothy's thoughts:
The stories I like most are the ones with legs — ones we can keep writing about day after day. All of these in my Top 5 hit that prerequisite, especially the Kardashian wedding. I can't believe we all (Kim included) wasted so much time on that.

1. Prince William marries Kate Middleton.
2. Kim Kardashian gets married and divorced.
3. Charlie Sheen gets fired and goes crazy.
4. Amy Winehouse dies.
5. Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher split.

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5 Best films of 2011

Editors' panel

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▶ The ladies of "Bridesmaids" made us laugh so hard, we forgot about all those boring Oscar-bait movies.

▶ We're not the only ones who recognized the excellence of **"Bridesmaids"** — a (gasp!) comedy. SAG nominated it for its Ensemble Award, which is pretty much their Best Picture equivalent. It's nice to see an honest portrait of friendship among women — poop jokes and all — get some love. ● AR

▶ The only thing controversial to me about this list is that **"The Help"** didn't fare better than **"Midnight in Paris."** ● PH

▶ I can't argue with this list — except **"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2."** Can I then expect that when **"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn: Part 2"** comes out next year, that it'll end up on the Best Films of 2012 list? ● HP

▶ I don't think you can expect **"Twilight"** on the Best of 2012 list because **"Harry Potter"** and "Twilight" aren't on the same wavelength. I think it was **Stephen King** who said, "'Harry Potter' is about confronting fears, finding inner strength and doing what is right in the face of adversity. 'Twilight' is about how important it is to have a boyfriend." But there could have been improvements to "HP" (the character aging, for one). I think, like **"The Help,"** this is a case of "the book is always better." ● MEREDITH ENGEL, FEATURES WRITER

▶ I'd like to make the plea that if you haven't seen **"Beginners"** — and it seems like not many people have — to please check it out. All of the performances are exemplary, from **Christopher Plummer** to **Ewan McGregor** to **Cosmo**, a rescued Jack Russell terrier. ● DR

Metro's Top 5

1. "Bridesmaids" (dir. Paul Feig)
2. "Midnight in Paris" (dir. Woody Allen)
3. "Shame" (dir. Steve McQueen)
4. "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2" (dir. David Yates)
5. TIE: "Beginners" (dir. Mike Mills); "The Help" (dir. Tate Taylor); "Super 8" (dir. J.J. Abrams)

Film editor Heidi Patalano's Top 5

Heidi's thoughts: It's a pity that "Shame" won't get the awards it deserves. After only two films, director Steve McQueen has proven himself to be an auteur. His hyper-visual method of storytelling is a breath of fresh air. Steven Spielberg ("War Horse," "Tintin") may be great at what he does, but he's always putting out the same product.

1. "Shame" (dir. Steve McQueen)
2. "Melancholia" (dir. Lars von Trier)
3. "The Skin I Live In" (dir. Pedro Almodovar)
4. "Bridesmaids" (dir. Paul Feig)
5. "Drive" (dir. Nicolas Winding Refn)

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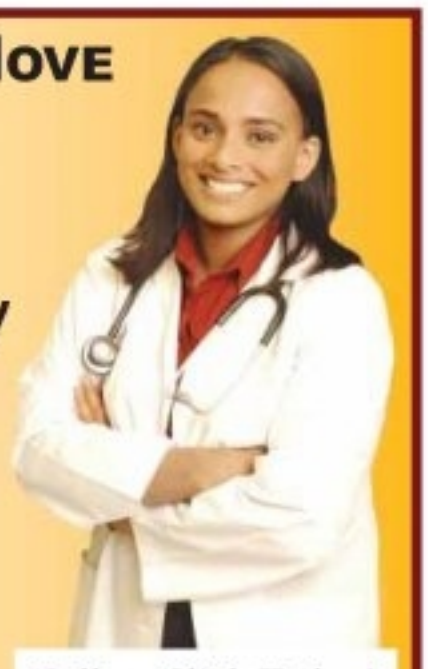

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A LITTLE NEW YEARS' HUMOR

By Attorney George Warshaw

I'm abandoning anything legal for the moment to bring you a little humor to start the New Year. Here's the story. It made me laugh, hopefully it will for you too.

Sitting on the side of the road waiting to catch speeding drivers, a Massachusetts state trooper sees a car puttering along at 24 mph.

He thinks to himself, "This driver is as dangerous as a speeder!" So he turns on his lights and pulls the driver over. Approaching the car, he notices that there are five elderly ladies - two in the front seat, and three in the back, wide-eyed and white as ghosts.

The driver, obviously confused, says to him, "Officer, I don't understand. I was going the exact speed limit. What seems to be the problem?"

The trooper, trying to contain a chuckle, explains to her that "24" was the Route number, not the speed limit. A bit embarrassed, the woman grinned and thanked the officer for pointing out her error.

"But before you go, Ma'am, I have to ask, "is everyone in this car OK? These women seem awfully shaken." "Oh, they'll be all right in a minute, officer. We just got off Route 128."

See you next year! © 2011 George Warshaw.

GWA

George Warshaw is a real estate attorney and author. He represents buyers and sellers of homes and condos in Massachusetts, and prepares wills, trusts, and estate plans. George welcomes new clients and questions at metro@warshawlaw.com

GETTY IMAGES

▶ "Someone Like You"? It's more like there's no one like you, Adele!

2011 in music have had it all

Editors' panel

▶ One thing I want to ask you all about **Adele**: Did you listen to "21" tons, or just recognize it for its indisputable awesomeness? I ask because I put the album at No. 1 because it's f—ing great! But I probably only listened to the whole thing like 10 times. ● PH

▶ I don't think anyone would deny that she has a pretty wild voice, but I've never been able to listen to an entire **Adele** song all the way through, let alone her whole album. She's like Ambien for me: Really lovely for five minutes, but then there's the unsatisfying sleep and need to feel again and/or eat a bagel. ● MW

▶ You don't have to listen to the full **Adele** album — nearly every song is bound to be on the radio or a commercial or TV show or your "He Was A Jerk Anyway" playlist. ... And no complaints on that, either. ● AR

▶ Where's the love for my favorite pants-dropping party-rockers, **LMFAO**? ● ME

▶ I think if it weren't for

Metro's Top 5

1. Adele, "21"
2. PJ Harvey, "Let England Shake"

3. Cults, "Cults"
4. The Dø, "Both Ways Open Jaws"
5. Deer Tick, "Divine Providence"

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could lllllllll!

"Super Bass," I'd say **LMFAO** made the year's best dance tune. You know what's amazing though? Did anybody even list **Gaga**? Did we all leave her out because we thought it would've been a conflict of interest because she was a Metro editor for a day? Or was "Born This Way" just a big marketing push that we all forgot about when she wasn't on every medium of communication every day? **PH**

▶ I just can't understand why **Gaga** would go the Kardashian make-as-much-money-as-possible-while-people-still-seem-to-find-me-fascinating route. She's far beyond saturation right now. ... She used to be — and still could be, if she just takes a breather for a beat — so much more interesting and important than that. But in 2011, I'll remem- ber that pointless "A Very Gaga Thanksgiving" special more than her music. **AR**

▶ **PJ Harvey** just can't do any wrong. I don't know of anyone cooler (**Gaga** wishes she had one ounce of her originality). **DR**

▶ Odd that no one has even mentioned **Radiohead** ei-ther. They released an al-bum called "King of Limbs" in 2011. Apparently they're not kings of lists. **PH**

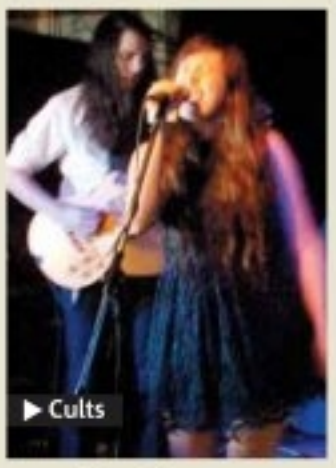
▶ Regarding **Radiohead**, in college, I used to wait in line outside of Tower Records to buy their albums the night of their release and now I can't be bothered to even seek it out to illegally download it. Maybe with age I've just realized that if I have one Radiohead album, I kind of have them all? **DR**

▶ Just noticed the top four is all women! Was 2011 a banner year for ladies, or is it just because I'm the only dude contributing? **PH**

▶ It is strange. Where's the rock 'n' roll? **DR**

▶ The best male-centric indie pop acts out there are in between records. Don't worry, Pat. The guys normally run the show, and they'll be back. **HP**

▶ Or are all of the biggest male stars these days country, and a little off of our radar? Even the "American Idol" winner this year, **Scotty McCreery**, is a good ol' boy. And, of course, we've lost **Justin Timberlake**, who now thinks he's an actor — which is OK if he keeps it to "SNL." **AR**



▶ Cults

Music editor Pat Healy's Top 5

Pat's thoughts: It was hard to choose only five albums, which is a testament to how great 2011 was. Though they didn't make my list, singles like Nicki Minaj's "Super Bass" and Foster the People's "Pumped Up Kicks" were so undeniably big. What is so interesting about these songs is that "Kicks" originally surfaced online more than a year before it took off, and Minaj released her album in 2010, too. "Go Outside" by Cults — another 2011 fave — originally hit the Web in 2010. We could remember 2011's music as the year of delayed reaction if it wasn't for Adele. The reaction to her was immediate and unanimous.

1. **TIE: Adele,** "21" and **Cults,** "Cults"
2. **Deer Tick,** "Divine Providence"
3. **The Dø,** "Both Ways Open Jaws"
4. **Jay-Z & Kanye West,** "Watch the Throne"
5. **Telekinesis,** "12 Desperate Straight Lines"

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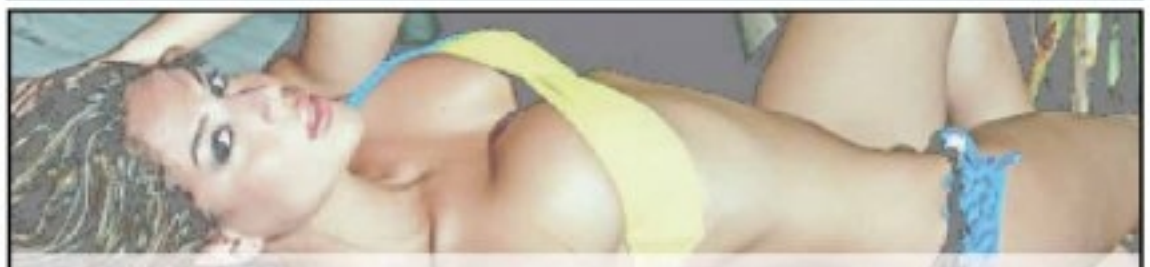

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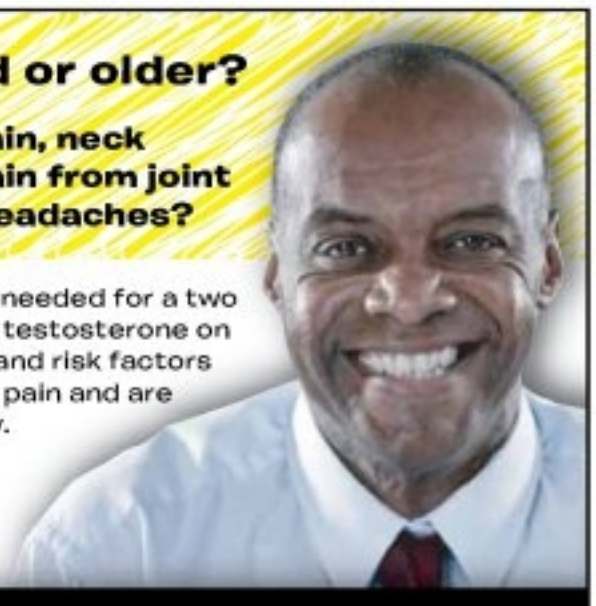

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5 Television shows that 'Justified' our love of the small screen in '11

Editors' panel

▶ Despite the sad lack of **Don Draper** this year, it's kind of cool that no new **"Mad Men"** episodes meant everyone had the opportunity to become obsessed with other shows, like **"Breaking Bad"** (**Bryan Cranston** is my hero). ● AR

▶ **"Breaking Bad"** has filled my **"Mad Men"** void nicely. It is so undisputedly well done that it feels like this stuff is happening to people you know, rather than on a show you watch. "Oh, man! Too bad my friend Walt got punched in the face at the bar the other night. Oh well. Keep cooking that meth, Walt! ... Wait I don't know these people personally!" ● PH

▶ I guess it's just comforting to know there's always meth distribution to fall back on in case this whole "writing" thing doesn't work out financially. ● DR

BEN LEIBER/AMC
▶ Bryan Cranston, left, and Aaron Paul star in "Breaking Bad."

▶ I haven't watched **"Breaking Bad"** simply because I'm afraid it's too disturbing for me to handle. And I've seen every episode of **"The Sopranos"**! ● HP

▶ Let me just say kudos to **"Revenge"** for landing in the Top 5. This show keeps getting juicier and juicier. And while I don't think any sitcom is as good as **"How I Met Your Mother,"** I'm glad it's **"New Girl"** over **"Whitney."** ● ME

▶ **Zooey Deschanel** has got us right where she wants us in **"New Girl"**! Adorkable? It's not working for me! She's too hot to be a dork. ● PH

▶ I don't want to blame the adorkable factor on **Zooey**. We may have tagged her with that. But I agree — you can't put glasses on a hot, funny girl and pretend she's awkward. **Tina Fey**, you're on notice! ● MW

▶ I love that a hot, funny girl actually gets to play awkward without being painted as a total caricature in **"New Girl."** There are plenty of hot ladies out there who don't have their s— together, whether in their love life or work life or whatever, so the premise totally works for me (see also: **"Bridesmaids"**). Jess is goofy and flawed, and we love her because of it. The fact that she's **Zooey Deschanel** is a bonus. ● AR

▶ I say less Jess, more airtime for the roommates. I think they are the unsung (key word: unsung. STOP SINGING, JESS!) heroes of the show. ● DR

▶ Can we talk about **Ron Swanson (Nick Offerman)** on **"Parks and Recreation"** for a second? Maybe it's because I work among writers and live among skinny musicians but ... does anyone else have a little crush? Maybe? Nevermind; forget this happened. ● MW

▶ No, you're onto something. For all the awful new shows that tried to be about "manly men" (**"Last Man Standing," "Man Up!"**), **Rob Swanson** could kick their asses with a simple look and mustache twitch. Then he'd whittle a wooden figure depicting his triumph in the battle. ● AR

Metro's Top 5

1. "Parks and Recreation" (NBC)
2. "Breaking Bad" (AMC)
3. "Revenge" (ABC)
4. "New Girl" (Fox)
5. TIE: "The Walking Dead" (AMC); "Community" (NBC); "Justified" (FX)

TV editor Amber Ray's Top 5

Amber's thoughts: Nobody paints working-class characters quite so nuanced as "Justified" — look at Emmy-winner Margo Martindale's Mags Bennett.

1. "Justified" (FX)
2. "Louie" (FX)
3. "Breaking Bad" (AMC)
4. "Parks and Recreation" (NBC)
5. "Game of Thrones" (HBO)

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Tom Hill
CGA STAFF WRITER

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Best bubblies for New Year's Eve

When the clock strikes 12, are you better off with a glass of champagne or a bottle of Prosecco?

At this point, you're likely planning your outfit, finalizing your entourage and mapping out your party route for New Year's Eve. But according to Nick Poletto, who teaches about wine and spirits as the education director for the Kobrand Corporation, you still have some bigger dilemmas ahead.

"There's only two major decisions you have to make on New Year's Eve," Poletto says. "What bubbles are you gonna drink, and who you're gonna kiss at midnight. I can only help you with one of those."

Here are Poletto's tips on choosing your best bubbly — whether you're celebrating with:

A boisterous house party

"Bring a bottle of Prosecco. Prosecco is a great sparkling wine from Italy. It's kind of fruity, it's fun, it's not sweet but it's easy to drink. In Italy they drink it a lot just for fun, or just to cleanse their palate. You can show up at a party sometimes, hand over the bottle and never see it again all night, so you wanna keep that in mind when you're going out. If you're gonna show up [somewhere] you know you probably won't ever see that bottle again, I would bring Prosecco."

A night out at a bar

"If you go to a bar, you're [normally] not gonna see champagne by the glass — you'll see more Proseccos. On New Year's Eve they usually bring in a couple of cases [of champagne], but they're not gonna have them by the glass — they're gonna let you order it by the bottle, and you're gonna pay 90, 100 bucks for it. So if you go to a bar, you're not gonna have a whole lot of choice. If you're a lot of people and you're not really focusing on the wine, order Prosecco: It's a lot of fun, it's got the bubbles in it, it's light and it's fruity."

BANANASTOCK

▶ Ringing in the year with a rowdy party? Prosecco is probably your best bet.

A formal gathering

"If you're going to someone's house where they appreciate wine, I would suggest a California sparkling wine because it's high quality, it's well-respected and it's just not as pricey as champagne is."

A dinner party

"If you want to bring something that's totally different but still affordable, I would suggest Cava from Spain. It's got those great yeasty and toasty flavors, and it's got great character to it, but it's not that expensive."

A quiet night in

"If you're having an intimate New Year's Eve with just your significant other [or] a few close friends, that to me would be champagne. Champagne is not cheap — it's the most expensive of the sparkling wines. It's also the most enjoyable of the sparkling wines, in my opinion, and you wanna make sure you can get more than one glass. If you're celebrating something more than New Year's Eve on that day — maybe an anniversary, an engagement, a first child or a special something that happened that year — I think it's always romantic to have rosé champagne."

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ERIN BALDASSARI/METRO

▶ Chef William Kovel will be serving up Sandy Neck oysters at Catalyst on New Year's Eve.

Put the emphasis on the eve part of New Year's Eve

Nosh On

LINDA LABAN
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It's possible to avoid the big New Year's Eve noisemakers, both human and trumpet-y, if you dine early. At some restaurants with prix fixes, early seatings cost less, too.

At **Meritage**, chef Daniel Bruce's four-course prix fixe menu includes sumptuous dishes like maple- and mustard-rubbed, roasted Colorado lamb sirloin with caramelized baby vegetables for $95 at the 5 p.m. seating and $175 for five courses after 7 p.m. In the Back Bay, **Asana**'s four-course dinner — including grilled wild sturgeon with Aquidneck clams and American paddlefish caviar — costs $20 less at earlier seatings.

At **Towne**, chef Lydia Shire keeps it simple, adding just one special dish to her voluptuous menu: pan-roasted Dover sole with king crab and black trumpet mushrooms ($55). It's also business as brilliantly as usual at **Catalyst** in Cambridge. No prix fixe, but chef William Kovel adds some special treats: Try the Sandy Neck oysters with gingered leeks and Meyer lemon sabayon ($12). No bells or whistles — just great food.

11 Best local theater productions of 2011

Enough already with the top 10 lists In honor of the year that will soon come to a close (and some especially great drama in Boston), our theater critic lists, in order, his choices for the 11 best local productions of 2011

STEVE WOLLEIN©

▶ Johnnie McQuarley and James Milord were first-rate in "The Brothers Size."

'The Brothers Size' and 'Marcus; Or the Secret of Sweet'

1 The latter two pieces of Company One's trilogy The Brother/Sister Plays are so much better than the first that it's got to be the extraordinary direction of Summer L. Williams that earns them bragging rights as the finest production of the year.

2 The Gershwins' 'Porgy & Bess': Diane Paulus enlisted the phenomenally talented Audra McDonald and Norm Lewis to create this breathtaking pre-Broadway production. Stephen Sondheim launched an attack before seeing it, but Paulus let her work speak for itself. Game, set, match to Paulus.

▶ "Porgy & Bess"

MICHAEL J. LUTCH

3 'Candide': All was definitely for the best at the Huntington Theatre when Voltaire's scathing 18th century satire was packing the house. One of the finest, funniest, most engaging productions this town has seen in years.

4 'The Rocky Horror Show': Ryan Landry and his Gold Dust Orphans played it straight with their adaptation of this cult classic, and the result is a spectacular spectacle at Club Oberon that keeps getting extended.

5 'Hair': Sorry all you naysayers, but those hippies made the Colonial Theatre come alive with a sit-in that left me singing "Let the Sunshine In" for a very long time. Peace, love and thanks for a great touring production.

6 'Ajax': War is never pretty, but this modern-day adaptation of Sophocles' tragedy at the A.R.T. was disturbingly ugly, yet brilliant. What felt like the longest 90 minutes in history was also among the most powerful.

7 'The Comedy of Errors' and 'Richard III': The all-male Propeller Theatre Company came closer to capturing the true essence of Shakespeare than any of the highbrow haughty productions that have been boring people to sleep for centuries.

8 'All's Well That Ends Well': Steve Maler and the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company had no problem with what is considered one of the Bard's problem plays. Wildly entertaining, outrageously funny and free. Does it get much better than that?

9 'The Divine Sister': Who doesn't love a troupe of foul-mouthed singing nuns? In the hands of SpeakEasy Stage Company, Charles Busch's twisted spoof of nun-themed movies was heavenly fun.

10 'The Drowsy Chaperone': The sweet tale of a lonely man's love affair with big, old-fashioned musicals looked much better on the SpeakEasy stage than it did at the Colonial several years ago. Perfect family fare.

11 'Burn the Floor': It was the dancing — not the sexy, scantily clad dancers — that made me go back and see this show twice. But the sizzle certainly helped make this show hot.

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The first knights of First Night

We asked some of the comedians and musicians performing in the annual citywide New Year's Eve celebration all about their resolutions

CHRIS STRONG

Mavis Staples, singer

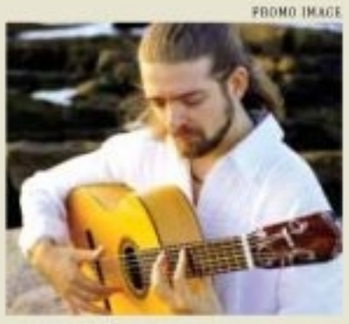
Resolution: My resolution is the same as it is every year, to relose the same few pounds I lost last January!
The resolution I usually give up on: To keep to my exercise regimen in the hotel health spa or gym when I am on the road.

PAUL ROBICHEAU

Tony V, comedian

Resolution: To work, tirelessly, on my effort to ensure that Dolph Lundgren receives a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.
The resolution I usually give up on: I will no longer hide my admiration for John Tesh.

PROMO IMAGE



Juanito Pascual, guitarist

Resolution: A renewal of my commitment to be thankful for every moment.
The resolution I usually give up on: To go to bed before 2 a.m.!

Ellis Paul, musician

Resolution: I would like to write 20 of the best songs of my career. More importantly, I resolve to have everyone agree with me.
The resolution I usually give up on: I always vow to drink less, eat less, stress less, but then I also usually vow to laugh more, play more, celebrate more. It all ends up a wash in the process.

If you go

For more info on First Night, call 617-542-1399 or visit **www.firstnight.org.**

COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

Walter Sickert and The Army of Broken Toys, musicians

Resolution: To stage a SteamCRUNK MUSICAL unlike any other! The apocalyptic "28 Seeds" (and companion album) explodes all over Boston theater in April!
The resolution we usually give up on: We continually resolve to step back and relax ... but we just can't make ourselves stop working! It makes us too happy!

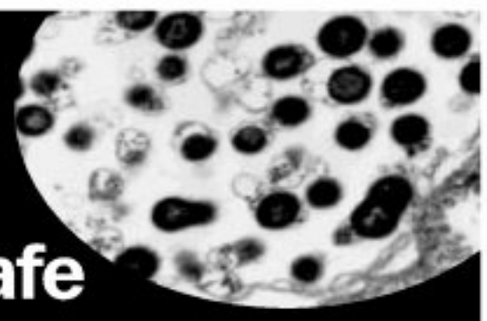
Other New Year's Eve offerings

First Night isn't the only thing going on in Boston on Dec. 31. Here are some other haps in the Hub.

- **The fourth annual Great Gatsby New Year's Eve** is exactly what it sounds like. Beginning at 8 p.m., readers at **Albi Lounge, Liberty Hotel** (215 Charles St., Boston) will recite F. Scott Fitzgerald's masterwork in its entirety. You're strongly encouraged to wear 1920s attire. For more info, visit **www.albiboston.com**
- Multiple events are happening at the **Seaport Hotel** (One Seaport Lane, Boston). **The Resolution Ball** is geared towards professionals in their 20s and 30s. Effin Vodka is the sponsor and the Felix Brown Band will perform. **The Back Bay Gala** is for the 40-plus set, and each year the black-tie-optional event attracts upwards of 600 boomers. For more info, visit **www.bostoneventguide.com**

PAT HEALY
pat.healy@metro.us

Life's Short Play Safe



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Predicting the 2012 gossip headlines

1. Interview — Angelina Jolie Confirms Rumor: "I'm Better Than You"

2. Madonna Breaks Hip Performing at Super Bowl

3. Area Mom Thinks She's Cool When She Discovers Adele

4. Proving She's A Real Cougar, Demi Moore Dates Zoo's Puma

5. Lady Gaga Shocks By Wearing Mom Jeans and Clogs

6. Women Take Preschool Hostage When Ryan Gosling Isn't Named Sexiest Man Alive Second Year in a Row

7. Katy Perry Gives Birth, Shoots Milk Out of Breasts Instead of Whipped Cream

8. Charlie Sheen Admits to Contracting Hepatitis C Through Tiger Blood

DOROTHY ROBINSON

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1

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Stand up for LOVE

FACT: 63% of all HIV/AIDS cases in the US are in gay and bisexual men and infection rates are rising among men who have sex with men.

Fenway Health is seeking HIV-negative men who have sex with men to participate in a vaccine trial to determine the safety and effectiveness of an investigational HIV vaccine.

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2

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A dream job come true

Married couple Vicky and James Black play Cinderella and Prince Charming in Disney on Ice Presents 'Dare to Dream'

FELD ENTERTAINMENT

▶ Sometimes, working with your spouse makes a lot of sense.

There's nothing easy about being a cast member of the latest Disney on Ice production, "Dare to Dream." The ensemble of princesses and their suitors have to be dramatic actors, physical comedians and on the lookout for Disney's signature ensembles of meddling mice and sneaky stepsisters while gazing lovingly into each other's eyes — skating backwards.

But for Cinderella and Prince Charming, it's a little easier to look smitten mid-spin. Married couple Vicky and James Black have been playing the iconic roles since the show hit the ice. Previously professional single skaters, they've only skated together.

"For us, it works really well — we have a good working relationship," says Vicky about sharing an intense training and travel schedule. "And because we know each other so well, we can read each other's body language."

It's something they suspect the audience picks up on. "What being in a marriage helps us do is make the connection more believable," says James. "What we can do is take our love and make it believable, and if we're doing our jobs, we hope people do come away with that."

As for their favorite part of the workday, that's an easy one. "The moment where I come out for the ball and we lock eyes for that first time together — for us, that's the best part," says Vicky.

MONICA WEYMOUTH
monica.weymouth@metro.us

If you go

Disney on Ice Presents 'Dare to Dream'
Feb. 17-26, TD Garden
www.disney.go.com/disneyonice

Dress code

As for the uniform, Cinderella isn't complaining. "It's still so magical to be able to be a Disney princess," admits Vicky. "I caught a silhouette of my shadow on the ice and I was like, 'Oh my goodness, that's Cinderella.'"

MIT announces platform for free online courses

MIT is planning to launch an open platform for free online classes, complete with certification for those who demonstrate mastery of their topics. The university announced "MITx" earlier this month, though it doesn't plan to launch the experimental prototype version of the platform until spring 2012.

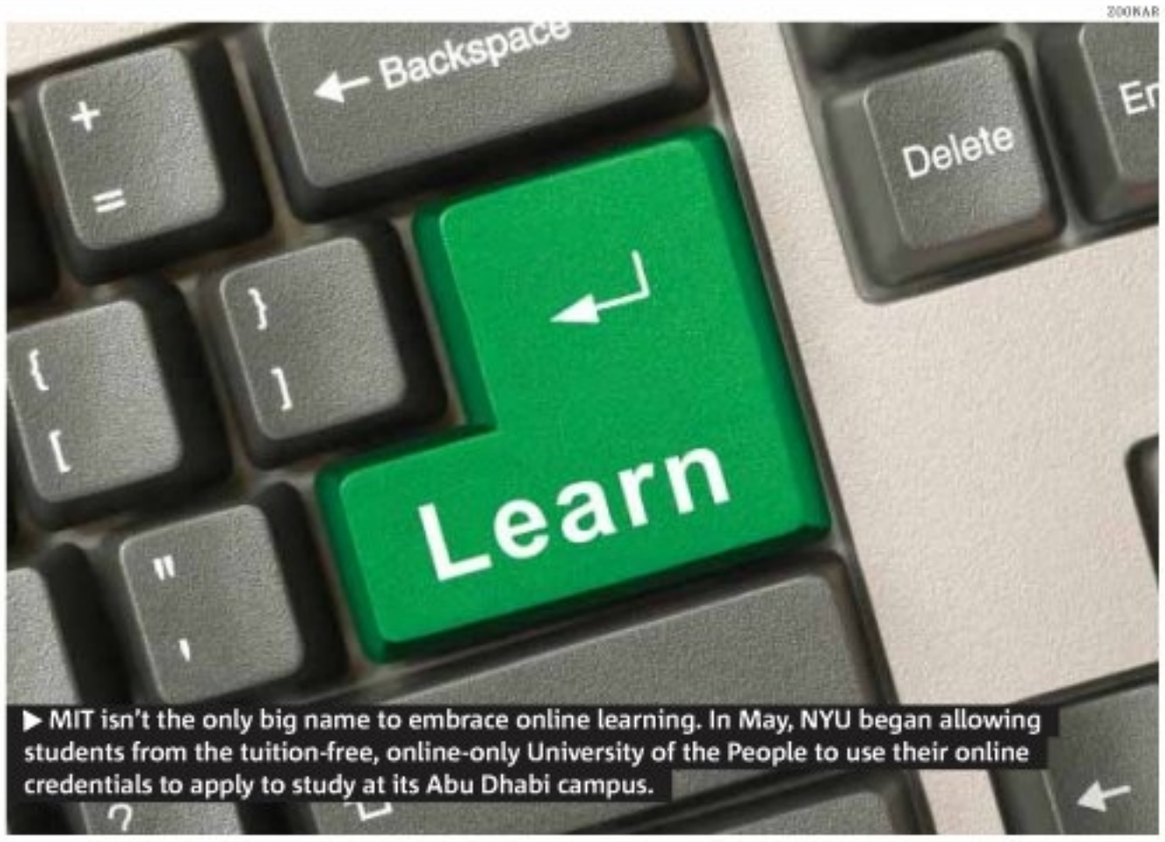
MIT already has a robust free online library of its course materials called OpenCourseWare. The 10-year-old site includes 2,100 MIT courses and has been used by more than 100 million people. Anybody can use it to view MIT class lecture notes, assignments and solutions, image galleries and, in some cases, even lecture videos.

MITx will put more structure around some of the school's online class content, including student-to-student discussions, self-assessment tools and access to online laboratories. After it releases the platform for its own site, it will allow any learning institution to use it for its own course offerings.

Students who complete courses will be eligible for certification, but don't get too excited at the prospect of hanging an MIT degree on your wall. MIT isn't going to attach its name to the certificate. Rather, it plans to create a not-for-profit body with a different name that will offer certification for a "modest fee."

SARAH KESSLER FOR Mashable
The Social Media Guide

ZOONAR



▶ MIT isn't the only big name to embrace online learning. In May, NYU began allowing students from the tuition-free, online-only University of the People to use their online credentials to apply to study at its Abu Dhabi campus.

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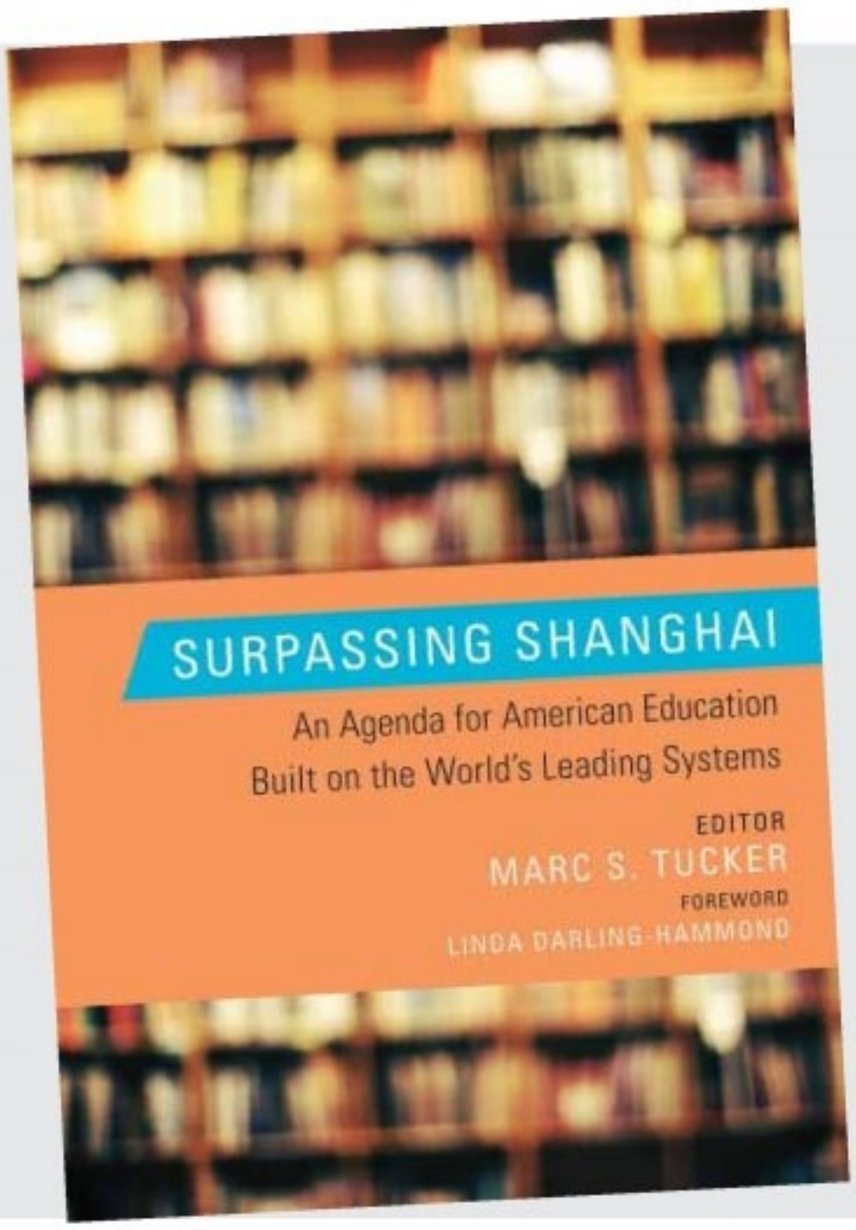

Setting new standards in a new world

In 'Surpassing Shanghai,' the National Center on Education and the Economy recommends looking to other countries for education strategies

In 2010, the secretary of education, Arne Duncan, asked the National Center on Education and the Economy — along with others — to create a report on education strategies of the United State's top competitors. The official report was submitted last December, and this month Harvard University Press is releasing a volume of policy recommendations based on the research: "Surpassing Shanghai: An Agenda for American Education Built on the World's Leading Systems." The book is edited by the president of the NCEE, Marc S. Tucker, who has long campaigned for creating more thorough standards in U.S. education.

Why has the idea of standards in education been such a driving force in your career as a researcher and author?

When the performance of our students is compared with that of students in other countries, we tend to come out somewhere between the middle and the bottom distribution. This country ought to be very, very concerned about that. Most economists agree that in the long run, a country's standard of living is a function of how well educated [and] how skilled its people are. Time after time, when we look at how these other countries are doing this, we find that they have set high standards and put curricula in place to get students to those standards.

Was No Child Left Behind a step in the right direction, from your perspective?

It was, in the sense that the country got concerned about standards. But No Child left it up to the states to determine their own standards, and they imposed severe consequences on schools that failed to meet those standards, so many of the states deliberately set low standards to ensure that their schools wouldn't have to face the music.

BRUCE WALSH
bruce.walsh@metro.us

From the past

In some conservative circles you're often demonized for a set of policy suggestions you sent to Hillary Clinton in 1992 — the "Dear Hillary letter." What is your response to this uproar?

These critics say it was a plan to turn their children into little cogs in the industrial wheel, with regional boards that will assign children — Soviet style — to a particular career. You won't find a word in that letter to support that view. I urge you to Google the text and read it. I've never entertained any thoughts like that. It's absurd. What I was doing in that letter was simply saying that we don't have the kind of system that most top-performing countries have, in which the pieces fit together in a way that serves kids.

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BRAIN BUSTER SUDOKU

LEVEL: VERY HARD

			2					
5		8	9		6	3		
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		4				1	7	9
	3			9			8	
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	3		8		6		5	
4				3			2	
		7			5	2		
		8	2	6				7
		3			4		8	

Horoscope

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19**. If you find yourself badly in need of a small but urgent favor, go to someone you help all the time. Anyone of this ilk would be eager to do what he or she can for you.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** A rather big opportunity could come in a small package. Someone you know socially who is involved in a new enterprise might want to bring you in on the action.

♓ Pisces Feb. **20-March 20.** In order to have a chance for good results, don't broadcast your ambitious intentions. Take positive measures to accomplish your aims and speak only after your efforts are fulfilled.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Faith is based on believing in something about which little or no proof exists. The more faith you place in someone, the more you'll think that she or he will come through for you.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** Although you aren't apt to seek out competitive situations, you aren't likely to dodge them either. Once you enter a race, however, you'll thoroughly enjoy the challenge.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** If you don't feel you are being weighed down by a difficult situation, the more open you'll be to suggestions on handling one. Someone will have the perfect solution for you.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** Things will go more smoothly when implementing an important change if you handle any complications that arise one at a time. It'll reduce your chances of bungles and gaffes.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** Because you'll enjoy testing your physical skills as well as your mental abilities, try to find and participate in a fun activity that would challenge both your muscles and your brainpower.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Be sure to dot every "i" and cross every "t," especially in a critical matter that you're attempting to finalize. All those small details can be of greater significance than usual.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** You're likely to be acutely aware of the shortcomings of others, but you should take strides to offer your insights in the form of constructive criticism, not put-downs.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** The possibilities for making personal gains look very good. Although many people might not consider yours a hefty haul, it could still be a significant amount to you.

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** You'll be far better equipped to handle assignments of a mental nature than you will be attempting most physical tasks. Thus, delegate the grunt work while personally seeing to the matters that require the little gray cells.

Across
1 Sheik colleague
5 Noncoms
9 Girder (2 wds.)
14 __ fide
15 Quartet minus one
16 About, datewise
17 Casual wear(2 wds.)
19 Making do with
20 Listening device
21 Samovars
22 Ginger or cloves
23 Wished and hoped
25 "Godfather" co-star
26 Military addr.
27 Urgent
30 Raring to go
33 Skylark maker
34 Boar's mate
36 Team cheers
37 Meter reader
38 Freighter hazard
39 Mexican Mrs.
40 Caravan halt
41 Fudge flavoring
42 Car stopper
44 Flour holder
45 66 and I-80
46 Buried the hatchet
50 Castaways' refuges
52 Liability
53 Not even one
54 Ms. DeGeneres
55 Slim possibility (2 wds.)
57 Hangar occupant
58 Field
59 Speckled horse
60 Purplish flower
61 Take it easy
62 __ Sedgwick of the screen

Down
1 Waned
2 Wisdom tooth
3 Habituate
4 Charlotte of "Bananas"
5 Hi-fi system
6 Piano size
7 Cookie sheets
8 Distress call
9 Swelling reducer(2 wds.)
10 Beachwear
11 Mr. Sevareid
12 Complexion woe
13 __ wheels (sporty rims)
18 On edge
22 Pert
24 Long sighs
25 Cattle stalls
27 Block-shaped
28 Cousin of PDQ
29 Laze around
30 Returns org.
31 Lemony-tasting
32 Sear a steak
33 Grounds
35 Like some hours
37 Tearooms
38 Posse's quarry
40 More frequently
41 Jolly feeling
43 Garfield's girlfriend
44 Wild feline
46 Big celebrations
47 Pester
48 Country parson
49 Helen, in Spanish
50 Pandora's boxful
51 Mattress support
52 Be brave enough
54 Smog monitoring grp.
55 Like the horizon
56 Hot Springs st.

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8	3			4			6	
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4		3	8	5	7	6		2
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	8		4					
		2	3	1		8	5	

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

			6	5	3	4		2
	2			4		1	3	
					2		6	
		3	5		1			
4								9
			4		7	8		
	4		3					
	9	1		6			5	
8		6	1	7	5			

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to last week's crossword

H	U	M	P	■	L	I	O	N	■	B	A	I	T	
O	R	A	L	■	E	N	D	U	P	■	U	N	D	O
B	A	L	E	■	E	L	E	N	A	■	S	T	E	M
O	L	L	A	■	W	E	S	■	L	I	L	I	E	S
■	■	■	S	P	A	T	■	O	M	N	I	■	■	■
L	I	V	E	R	Y	■	S	P	I	N	N	I	N	G
A	N	I	S	E	■	P	O	R	E	■	E	M	I	R
D	E	R	■	■	L	U	N	A	R	■	■	A	G	A
E	R	G	O	■	A	M	A	H	■	S	I	G	H	S
S	T	O	C	K	C	A	R	■	R	I	V	E	T	S
■	■	■	E	E	K	S	■	B	O	C	A	■	■	■
K	U	B	L	A	I	■	O	L	D	■	N	O	S	E
O	R	E	O	■	N	I	X	I	E	■	H	O	L	D
N	E	A	T	■	G	L	E	N	N	■	O	P	I	E
G	Y	M	S	■	■	K	N	I	T	■	E	S	P	N

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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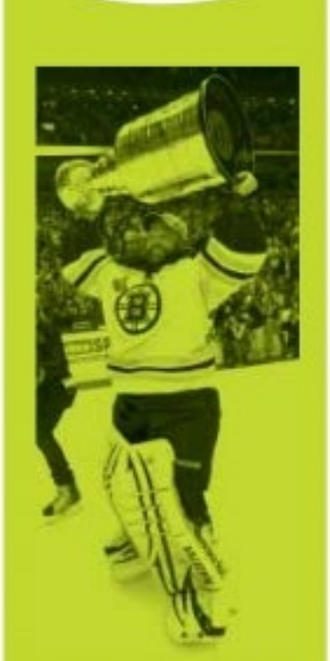

Metro Boston's Athlete of the Year

PAGE 29

HUB'S BEST OF 2011

There was plenty to cheer — and jeer — in Boston sports this year with hirings, firings and the end of a Cup drought From resurgent wins to epic collapses, here's our top 10 stories

10. The Patriot Way?

Signing Ocho & Albert
The Patriots made headlines by bringing in two questionable personalities. Five months later, one is gone, the other's a bust up to this point.

9. Hot Sox

Sox summer lovin'
It wasn't all negative. The Sox had the best record in the AL during the majority of the summer behind two MVP candidates in Jacoby Ellsbury and Adrian Gonzalez.

8. Elbow smash

Rondo's ugly injury
The Celtics were already struggling against Miami, but when Dwyane Wade took down Rajon Rondo right on his elbow in Game 3, it was over for the C's.

7. 7th heaven

B's own Game 7s
The gritty Bruins took out Montreal in a first-round Game 7 OT, then edged Tampa Bay in the ECF. Against the Canucks? Well, you know the rest.

6. Valentine's Day(s)

Bobby V in Boston
It seemingly took a decade, but Larry Lucchino, ahem, the Red Sox front office hired the former Mets and Rangers manager on Dec. 1.

5. Jets get last laugh

Jets stun Patriots
Just a month earlier, the Pats blasted New York 45-3 at Gillette. In January, Bart Scott was talking trash after the Jets beat down Tom Brady and Co. 28-21 in the AFC divisional round.

4. See ya, Perk

Kendrick to OKC
The Celtics dealt their beloved center and Nate Robinson to the Thunder for Jeff Green and Nenad Kristic on Feb. 24 in one of the most controversial trades in Boston history. Oh, and Shaq never got healthy.

3. Tito dumped

Francona out of a job
He broke the supposed Curse and won the Red Sox two World Series rings, but his time ran out after the Sox historic collapse in September. Details of his personal life also came out in a messy MLB divorce.

2. Finger lickin' good

The Sox are slobs
On the heels of the worst regular season collapse in major league history, it was brought to light that several Sox pitchers were boozing in the clubhouse and had a hankering for Popeye's.

1. Big, Bad Bruins

Lord Stanley returns
It only took 39 years but the Bruins made Boston a hockey town again in 2011. Tim Thomas was phenomenal in net all postseason and the end results caused people to storm the streets in Boston ... and Vancouver.

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SAVE BY THOMAS

Bruins goaltender is Metro Boston's Athlete of the Year ◐ Led Boston to its first Stanley Cup win in 39 years ◐ Captured Vezina, Conn Smythe

He may not have pumped Robert Luongo's tires, but in 2011, Tim Thomas had no trouble lifting Bruins fans higher than they've been in decades.

No sports story captured the imagination of New England more this past year than the Stanley Cup championship run of the Boston Bruins. And no player dominated the postseason more than Thomas, the Metro's choice for 2011 Boston Athlete of the Year.

"You know, we played for the Stanley Cup, but we played to win it, at least for me, not so much for the piece of hardware," Thomas said. "It's cool, that feeling, to know that you were the best team, you won your last game of the season, you were the last man standing. We're the best team in the world."

During the 2011 postseason, Thomas was brilliant in net, posting a 16-9 record with a 1.98 goals against average. He posted four shutouts, including Game 7 of both the Eastern Conference finals against Tampa Bay, and fittingly, the Cup-clinching Game 7 victory against the Canucks in Vancouver on June 15, cementing his status as the Conn Smythe Trophy winner as postseason MVP.

A season removed from an injury-marred 2010 campaign, Thomas captured his second Vezina Trophy in three years as the league's top regular-season goaltender by breaking Dominik Hasek's single-season save-percentage record.

"Tim Thomas, in these playoffs just totally dominated."
BRUINS COACH CLAUDE JULIEN

After stumbling in losses to the Canadiens in the first two games of the Bruins opening playoff series, Thomas embarked on a record-setting spring, recording the most saves (798) and facing the most shots (849) a single NHL postseason. His 238 saves against the Canucks were the most ever in the Stanley Cup finals.

And Thomas proved he could dish it out as well, knocking several Vancouver players down in front of the net and winning a psychological battle with Luongo, the emotionally fragile Canucks goalie, which only added to Thomas' legend.

JEFF GOLDBERG

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Tim Thomas is Metro Boston's Athlete of the Year.

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2011: The year Brady became a mere mortal

Tom Brady had lost in the postseason before.

But on Jan. 16, 2011, the calmest, coolest quarterback to play in the league since Joe Montana himself had lost his way.

Rex Ryan's defense did something to Brady that we had never seen before. It had broken Brady's demeanor, his confidence, his look. He was bug-eyed. He was left shaking his head. He was flustered beyond flustered.

Even in the Ravens loss (2010), the Giants loss (2008), the Indianapolis loss (2007) and the Denver loss (2006), Brady never had this look of surprise.

Just three weeks after the Patriots fell to the Jets, Brady collected his 2010 NFL MVP Award for his accomplishments in the 2010 regular season.

That same day, Aaron Rodgers led the Packers to a Super Bowl victory over Pittsburgh.

Just 10 months later, Rodgers was being touted as immortal as the Packers were chasing an undefeated season and a second straight Lombardi Trophy. He was shattering all the records.

Brady was suddenly an afterthought in NFL quarterbacking circles. We had certainly never seen this before.

MATT BURKE

Brady in 2011

Tom Brady's year started off in rough fashion as the Jets upset the Patriots in the AFC divisional round. Despite MVP numbers during this current season, he is taking a backseat to several young quarterbacks in terms of mainstream attention.

- **89.0 QB Rating**
  Brady had a QB rating of 100 or above in 12 of 16 games in 2010. Against the Jets on Jan. 16 it dipped big time.
- **106.7 QB Rating**
  Through 14 games in 2011 Brady has a 106.7 rating.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Tom Brady had a look of bewilderment in the divisional round loss to the Jets.

The year of the tight end

Rob Gronkowski and Aaron Hernandez showed plenty of promise in 2010.

In 2011, the two became just as reliable as Wes Welker.

Through 14 games in 2011, Gronkowski has 1,141 yards receiving and 15 touchdowns while Hernandez has 736 yard receiving and six touchdowns. METRO

2011-12 CELTICS REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
DECEMBER		
SHORTENED SEASON DUE TO LOCKOUT		
TUES, DEC. 27	AT MIAMI	8 P.M.
WED, DEC. 28	AT NEW ORLEANS	8 P.M.
FRI, DEC. 30	VS DETROIT	7:30 P.M.
JANUARY		
SUN, JAN. 1	AT WASHINGTON	6 P.M.
MON, JAN. 2	VS. WASHINGTON	7:30 P.M.
WED, JAN. 4	VS. NEW JERSEY	7:30 P.M.
FRI, JAN. 6	VS. INDIANA	7:30 P.M.
WED, JAN. 11	VS. DALLAS	8 P.M.
FRI, JAN. 13	VS. CHICAGO	8 P.M.
SAT, JAN. 14	AT INDIANA	7 P.M.
MON, JAN. 16	VS. OKC	8 P.M.
WED, JAN. 18	VS. TORONTO	7:30 P.M.
FRI, JAN. 20	VS. PHOENIX	7:30 P.M.
SUN, JAN. 22	AT WASHINGTON	1 P.M.
MON, JAN. 23	VS. ORLANDO	7:30 P.M.
THURS, JAN. 26	AT ORLANDO	8 P.M.
FRI, JAN. 27	VS. INDIANA	7:30 P.M.
SUN, JAN. 29	VS. CLEVELAND	6 P.M.
TUES, JAN. 31	AT CLEVELAND	7 P.M.
FEBRUARY		
WED, FEB. 1	VS. TORONTO	7:30 P.M.
FRI, FEB. 3	VS. NY KNICKS	8 P.M.
SUN, FEB. 5	VS. MEMPHIS	12 P.M.
TUES, FEB. 7	VS. CHARLOTTE	7:30 P.M.
THURS, FEB. 9	VS. LA LAKERS	8 P.M.
FRI, FEB. 10	AT TORONTO	7 P.M.
SUN, FEB. 12	VS. CHICAGO	3:30 P.M.
WED, FEB. 15	VS. DETROIT	7:30 P.M.
THURS, FEB. 16	AT CHICAGO	8 P.M.
SUN, FEB. 19	AT DETROIT	6 P.M.
MON, FEB. 20	AT DALLAS	8 P.M.
WED, FEB. 22	AT OKC	7 P.M.
TUES, FEB. 28	AT CLEVELAND	7 P.M.
WED, FEB. 29	VS. MILWAUKEE	7:30 P.M.
MARCH		
FRI, MARCH 2	VS. NEW JERSEY	7:30 P.M.
SUN, MARCH 4	VS. NY KNICKS	1 P.M.
TUES, MARCH 6	VS. HOUSTON	7:30 P.M.
WED, MARCH 7	AT PHILA	7 P.M.
FRI, MARCH 9	VS. PORTLAND	7:30 P.M.
SUN, MARCH 11	AT LA LAKERS	3:30 P.M.
MON, MARCH 12	AT LA CLIP	10:30 P.M.
WED, MARCH 14	AT GOLDEN ST	10:30 P.M.
FRI, MARCH 16	AT SACRAMENTO	10 P.M.
SAT, MARCH 17	AT DENVER	9 P.M.
MON, MARCH 19	AT ATLANTA	7:30 P.M.
THURS, MARCH 22	AT MILWAUKEE	8 P.M.
FRI, MARCH 23	AT PHILA	8 P.M.
SUN, MARCH 25	VS. WASHINGTON	6 P.M.
MON, MARCH 26	AT CHARLOTTE	7 P.M.
WED, MARCH 28	VS. UTAH	7:30 P.M.
FRI, MARCH 30	AT MINNESOTA	8 P.M.
APRIL		
SUN, APRIL 1	VS. MIAMI	3:30 P.M.
WED, APRIL 4	VS. SA SPURS	7:30 P.M.
THURS, APRIL 5	AT CHICAGO	9:30 P.M.
SAT, APRIL 7	AT INDIANA	7:30 P.M.
SUN, APRIL 8	VS. PHILA	6 P.M.
TUES, APRIL 10	AT MIAMI	7 P.M.
WED, APRIL 11	VS. ATLANTA	8 P.M.
FRI, APRIL 13	AT TORONTO	7 P.M.
SAT, APRIL 14	AT NJ NETS	7:30 P.M.
SUN, APRIL 15	AT CHARLOTTE	6 P.M.
TUES, APRIL 17	AT NY KNICKS	8 P.M.
WED, APRIL 18	VS. ORLANDO	8 P.M.
FRI, APRIL 20	VS. MIAMI	8 P.M.
THURS, APRIL 26	VS. MILWAUKEE	8 P.M.

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Tom Hil
CGA STAFF WRITER

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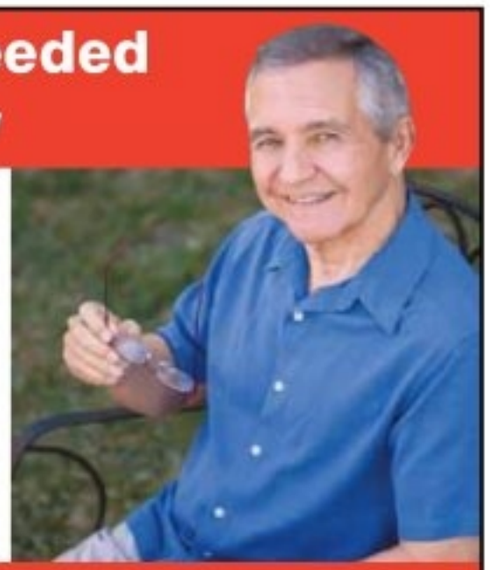

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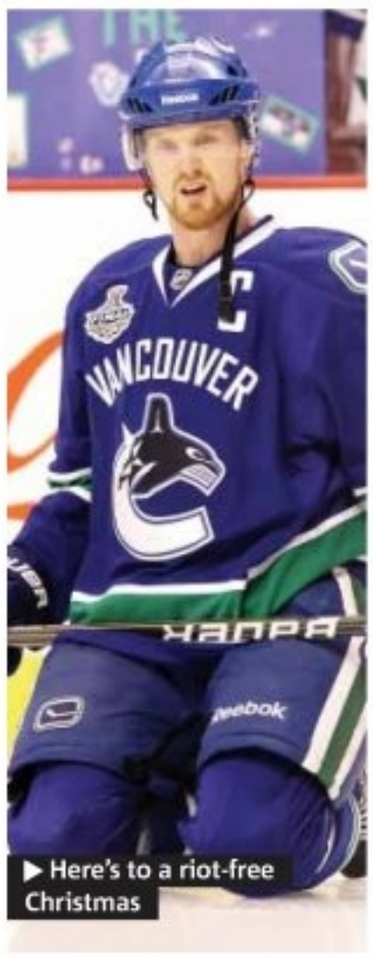
The year in despised jocks



▶ Here's to a riot-free Christmas

The usual suspects — and some new faces — managed to make jerks of themselves this year ◗ Here's five guys Boston could do without when the calendar changes to 2012

5 The Sedin Twins: Mike Milbury labeled them "Thelma and Louise," and caught plenty of flack for it. Today, that throwaway line is the least of Milbury's worries, but there's little doubt that Boston still can't stand these two ginger look-alikes.

4 Bill Polian: Yup, we still hate the Colts vice chairman and he still has to be enemy No. 1 if you ask around the Foxboro dungeon. Rex Ryan is just too lovable to be loathed by Pats fans and Bart Scott and LaDainian Tomlinson just aren't good enough anymore to make any hate list. Plus, the way the Colts tanked this season, orchestrated by Polian no doubt, is cause enough for a Spygate-style investigation. Unleash Goodell!

3 LeBron James: Sure Dwyane Wade slapped a Russian leg-sweep on Rajon Rondo in the Celtics-Heat series, snapping Rondo's elbow in two. But deep down, nearly everyone respects Wade. Fumes from "The Decision" were still lingering at the time, but Celtics fans truly despise LeBron for his front-running ways first and foremost. And of course nearly everyone in the country, sans South Beach, became Dallas Maverick fans in June.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

▶ Lick dem chops.

2 Alex Burrows: For years Tree Rollins (or was it Danny Ainge?) was the dean of Boston sports biting. Today, it is this Vancouver Canuck left winger who is known best in the Hub for his appetite for human flesh. When Burrows bit Patrice Bergeron's finger in Game 1 of the Stanley Cup finals last June, Boston instantly had a new sports villain.

1 John Lackey: Lackey's waistline was nearly as out of control as his ERA in 2011 as the pitcher was the face of Red Sox ineptitude during the monumental September collapse. Come to find out, Josh Beckett's Pabst Blue Ribbon and fried chicken diet was equally as pathetic, but at least Beckett had his moments on the mound throughout the year. It's piling on at this point, but to show just how bad it's gotten around here with Lackey: The best news coming out of Red Sox camp in October was that Lackey would be shut down for all of 2012. Certainly, that's reason to celebrate. MATT BURKE

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